

A Student's Story

# TEAM SUPPORT... continued

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Whether it's a rodeo team, IEP team, or just a group of people who care about them, students can benefit from the support of others. Lance's mother, Linda, notes that, "When he struggled in high school, it was always his rodeo friends who helped him through. They have things in common, the chores, the practice time, the commitment and love of their horses and the competition of the rodeo."

The advice of Lance and his mother, sum it up well. Linda says, "I strongly encourage parents to get involved in their child's education. Even at the college level, check for yourself to see if the college is following through with what they said they would."

Lance's advice to other students is straightforward. He says, "Make sure you learn to help yourself and accept help from others who are willing to help you. Stay away from people who are harmful to achieving your goals." Well stated, Lance!

For More Information:

Contact the State Vocational Rehabilitation Office in Lincoln at **1-402-471-3644** or toll free at **1-877-637-3422**.

You may obtain information on the Voc Rehab Service Office in your area by calling these numbers or accessing the Service Office listing on the web at: <http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us/vr/office.html>

## About this Publication

This publication, produced by Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation, is intended for students with disabilities and their families. The next issue, Volume #28, is scheduled for distribution in September 2008.

Please contact us if you:

- Would like additional copies of this publication.
- Have questions or would like more details about any of the information contained in this issue.
- Have a success story you'd like to share with us.
- Have suggestions for topics for future issues.
- Wish to be removed from the mailing list for this publication.

To view previous issues of this or other Vocational Rehabilitation publications, or to receive a free subscription to these publications, go to: <http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us/vr/newsstand.htm>. You may also contact the Vocational Rehabilitation State Office toll free at 1-877-NE-REHAB (1-877-637-3422) to receive these publications.

## Additional Resources

If you have questions or concerns about services from Vocational Rehabilitation or are looking for additional disability resources, contact the Hotline for Disability Services/Client Assistance Program at 1-800-742-7594 or in Lincoln at 402-471-0801 or e-mail [victoria.rasmussen@cap.ne.gov](mailto:victoria.rasmussen@cap.ne.gov)

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# Making It Work

Department of Education

A Student's Story

## TEAM SUPPORT

Lance Volker has participated in rodeos since the age of eight. This was a natural fit since his father and brothers are also involved in the sport, with his family traveling to as many as fifty rodeos a year. Rodeo for Lance has been more than just a hobby, however. It has played an important role for him in developing a strong work ethic, staying organized, assuming responsibility, and even choosing a college.

Lance's credits in the rodeo world are impressive, including the fact that he qualified for the National High School Rodeo three times. This competition involves over 1500 contestants from 46 states, 7 Canadian Provinces, and Australia.

Lance met many different people through this experience, many whom he still talks with today.

There is more to telling Lance's success story than just talking about steer wrestling and calf roping. As a student with a learning disability, Lance had a lot of work to do to get to where he is today. With difficulty in the areas of reading and writing, Lance gives credit for assistance provided by Amy Kroll and Ben Ideus, Special Education teachers, and Steve Petersen, Industrial Arts teacher, at Auburn High School. Lance says, "They helped me to understand my learning disability and to get help when needed."

While in high school, Lance received accommodations such as having tests read to him and being provided with copies of notes and worksheets. Teachers also helped him learn how to identify important information when reading. Amy Kroll worked with Lance during all four years of high school.

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Focus on Employment:

## Employers Speak

Who knows better than employers what it takes to be successful on the job? Representatives from Nebraska employers have shared their suggestions for success to be passed along to you. Check out what this employer has to say.

1. Show up with enthusiasm. Being on time with a positive attitude takes people further than almost anything I can think of.
2. Don't complain. Not everything has to be fun.
3. Ask your boss about the company. Your interest in the company's success might earn you career advancement.
4. Associate yourself with positive people. If you associate with problem employees, you might be guilty by association.
5. Constantly try to improve your performance. The better you perform at a task, the more job satisfaction you will feel.

Mitch Arnold, President  
Preferred Partners, LLC



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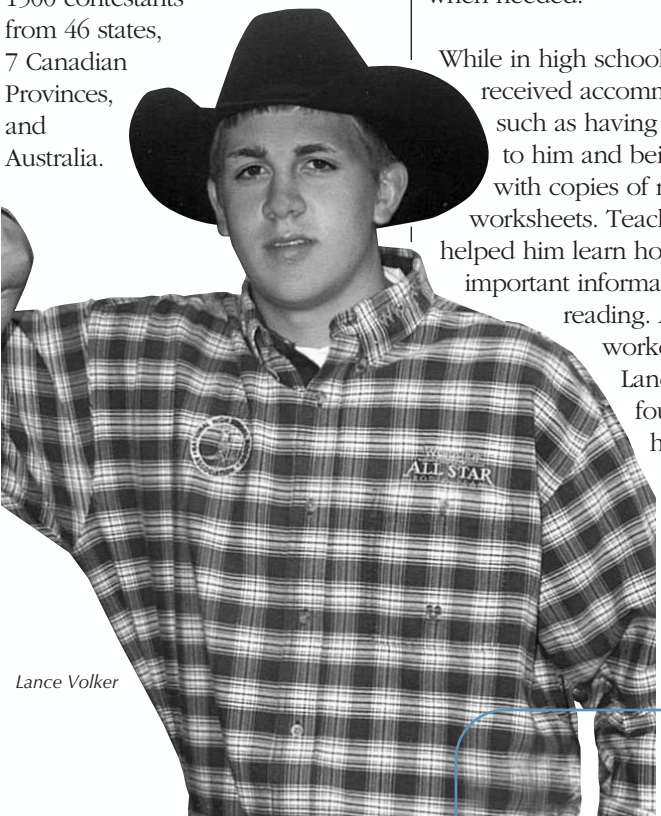
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Lance Volker

# Leveling the Playing Field with Accommodations

As a student with a disability preparing to attend college, it is important that you begin early to plan for the supports you will need to be successful. Before you even start looking at colleges, you need a good understanding of your skills, interests, and needs. Then, as you begin the college search, you can look at the type of programs and supports they provide in order to find the right place for you.

Whether you plan to attend a four year university or a community college, there are certain things you should know about accommodations. An accommodation is a change in the educational environment or in a task that permits a student with a disability to participate, to perform essential tasks, or to enjoy the benefits and privileges of participation equal to those enjoyed by students without disabilities. More simply stated, accommodations are made to level the playing field for the student with a disability.

## What's the First Step?

When starting the college search, your first visit should include a stop at the office of disability services. Each campus must have a person or department designated to work with students with disabilities. They will begin working with you right away to verify that you are eligible to receive accommodations.

The process, documentation requirements, and timelines to determine eligibility will vary depending upon the particular college. This is why it so important that you find out the requirements for the school you plan to attend.

Just because you had an IEP or 504 Plan in high school, don't expect that you will automatically be eligible for accommodations in college.

## You're Eligible. Now What?

Once you've selected your college, been accepted for admission, and been determined to be eligible for accommodations, the real work begins. The specific accommodations you will need must be determined.

It's helpful to start by examining the experience you had in high school. If you had accommodations during your high school years, you should have a pretty good idea of what worked and what didn't. While the college may not always agree to your request for a specific accommodation, this is a good place to start. The law regarding accommodations doesn't require that they honor your request for **specific** accommodations, but does require that they provide you with **effective** accommodations.

## Want Some Examples?

There is a lengthy list of possible accommodations that may be provided for a student with a disability. There is not a limited "menu" of accommodations and it is not dictated by type of disability. The following examples may help you see the possibilities:

- Students who are deaf may require sign language interpreters as an accommodation. This provides these students instant access to the information as it is discussed in the classroom. Deaf students may also be provided with note-takers, since it is virtually impossible to take notes while following a signed lecture.

- Students with physical limitations which prevent them from taking notes may request the accommodation of a note-taker. They may also use a scribe for taking exams. Thus, the physical limitations of the students will not interfere with their ability to demonstrate that they have learned the material.
- Students with mobility limitations, such as those who use wheelchairs, may request that classroom locations be moved if they are not accessible.
- Students with visual impairments may receive textbooks and other educational materials in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, or audio tapes.
- Students with learning disabilities may be accommodated in a variety of ways. Examples include extended time for taking tests, preferential seating in the classroom, or alternate testing sites.

## What's the Bottom Line?

The bottom line is simple, in that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assumes that people with disabilities have every right to further their education regardless of their disability. If accommodations are what you need to level the educational playing field, you have a right to receive them!

## A Student's Story

# TEAM SUPPORT . . . continued

(Continued from page 1)

She says, "I feel that by the time he graduated, he had a very good understanding of his disability and what he would need to do to successfully enroll in (and complete) college."

Others also played important roles in helping Lance during high school.

Not to be overlooked is the important role Lance's family played in helping him through school and in planning for the future. Amy is quick to give credit to Lance's parents for their support. She says that it was helpful to have them backing her up when working with Lance. Marsha notes that she worked with Lance's mother, Linda, when it was time to complete the paperwork and meet application deadlines for college admission.

Lance's plans for college were largely influenced by his rodeo ties. An older brother had attended Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge, Iowa and participated in rodeo there. Their mother, Linda, says that the positive experience of her older son made it easier to send Lance there and that the college rodeo coach was also a large factor. And, of course, it didn't hurt that he received a rodeo scholarship to attend the college.

Upon enrollment at Iowa Central, Lance began working with the Student Support Services office to arrange for accommodations to help him with classes. This was made possible after Lance provided them with the required documentation of his disability. Lance says that getting his thoughts down in writing has always been a challenge, but now he tells his thoughts to a tutor and the tutor writes them down for him.



Tests are read to him and he also receives help with note-taking. (Note: information on accommodations is provided in a related article in this issue.) Lance is majoring in Diesel Technology and plans to graduate with an Associate Degree after two years. He would like to work on trucks in a diesel performance shop and eventually have his own business.

And what about the rodeo? This still plays a very large role in Lance's life, as he is a member of the college rodeo team. This requires him to miss class on Fridays and sometimes Thursdays for four weeks in the fall and five weeks in the spring when they travel to rodeos in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska. They practice three nights a week and have a required study hall on Wednesday nights. In addition, Lance has two horses at school and he must take care of them morning and night, as well as keep their stalls clean.

Classes and coursework do not take a back seat to all of the responsibilities associated with the rodeo. In order to travel with the team, members must have their work completed prior to leaving and maintain a 2.0 grade point average. Lance and his mother both credit the support of the coach and other team members in making this happen. Lance says, "It is a lot of work, but it makes for a great bond among the members of the rodeo team."

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